

Message Text

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ACTION OES-04

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 CEQ-01 EPA-01 L-02 IO-10 RSC-01

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P 130735Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6705

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DEPT PASS CEQ AND EPA

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: SENV JA US OTRA (BABA, KOICHI)

SUBJ: ENVIRONMENTAL COOPRATION- VISIT OF MR. KOICHI BABA

REF: TOKYO 15949

MR. KOICHI BABA, DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION FOR GOJ ENVIRONMENT AGENCY, WILL ATTEND INFORMAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL AT UN HEADQUARTERS DEC 16-20. FOLLOWING THIS MEETING, BABA PLANS TO VISIT WASHINGTON, ARRIVING DEC 21 AND DEPARTING DEC 24 AM. ON DEC 23, BABA WOULD APPRECIATE MEETING WITH MISS DOLORES GREGORY, EPA, ON INTERNATIONAL REFERRAL SERVICE; WITH CEQ; AND WITH DR. PETER HOUSE, WASHINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH CENTER. BABA PLANS TO CALL MISS GREGORY FROM NEW YORK TO ARRANGE APPOINTMENTS. HE WILL ALSO ATTEMPT TO VISIT DEPT OF STATE, OES/ENV, IF TIME PERMITS, BUT EXPECTS TO SEE HERTER AND OTHERS IN NEW YORK IN ANY EVENT.

2. IN OTHER COMMENTS, BABA INDICATED THAT WHILE NEW ENVIRONMENT MINISTER, TATSUO OZAWA, SEEMS TO HAVE LITTLE INTEREST IN ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS PER SE, EA STAFFERS ARE HOPEFUL THAT AS MORE AGGRESSIVE AND EFFECTIVE NEGOTIATOR THAN HIS PREDECESSORS, OZAWA MAY HAVE GREATER SUCCESS IN SECURING FUNDS FOR ENVIRONMENT AGENCY FROM FINANCE MINISTRY. OZAWA, 57, A TOKYO UNIVERSITY LAW GRADUATE, IS MEMBER OF TANAKA FACTION WHO PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS

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LDP TREASURER, AND IS REGARDED AS CLOSE TO TANAKA. BABA ALSO

COMMENTED ON THE RECENT RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT COMMITTEE ON AUTOMOBILE POLLUTION (TOKYO 15951) THAT THE IMPOSITION OF TIGHT NOX CONTROLS BE DEFERRED FOR TWO YEARS, DURING WHICH INTERIM STANDARDS WOULD BE APPLIED. WHILE THIS RECOMMENDATION HAS BEEN CRITICIZED AS TOO LENIENT BY ENVIRONMENTALISTS AND TOO HARSH BY THE AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY, IT IS STILL EXPECTED TO BE FORMALLY ADOPTED, BUT ONLY AFTER ANOTHER "CEREMONIAL" MEETING TO ALLOW CRITICS TO HAVE THEIR SAY. BABA AGREED THAT THE OPPOSITION OF THE AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY MAY BE LARGELY A TACTICAL MANOEUVRE TO MINIMIZE PUBLIC SUSPICION THAT THE INTERIM STANDARDS WERE DESIGNED LARGELY TO ACCOMMODATE INDUSTRY OBJECTION.

3. BABA RECONFIRMED THAT THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY FAVORS THE MORE EXPLICIT LANGUAGE REAFFIRMING THE OECD ENVIRONMENTAL PRINCIPLES DEVELOPED FOR INCLUSION IN THE PROPOSED US-JAPAN ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENT TO THE VAGUE LANGUAGE PROPOSED IN THE RECENT GOJ DRAFT. THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO REFTEL TO ENABLE DISCUSSIONS OF THE AGREEMENT LANGUAGE TO GO FORWARD. EMBASSY WILL ALSO APPRECIATE ALL POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE TO MR. BABA DURING HIS VISIT
SHOESMITH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ENVIRONMENT, ITINERARY, MEETINGS, MEETING DELEGATIONS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974TOKYO16261
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740362-0432
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741234/aaaabdld.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 74 TOKYO 15949
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUL 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <27 MAR 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION- VISIT OF MR. KOICHI BABA
TAGS: SENV, OTRA, JA, US, (BABA, KOICHI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005